

Adhan, Tarab and Songs. On the Orient of Karol Szymanowski

Abstract. The Oriental current is one of the most intriguing aspects of Karol Szymanowski's music. Researchers argue about its nature and extent, taking different positions towards it. While some point to a direct and deep connection with Arab music and Middle Eastern culture, others question not only its importance in the evolution of the composer's style, but also the very fact of its existence. The biographical data provide arguments for both sides—Szymanowski took a keen interest in Middle Eastern civilization, but not in its music. As a result, the problem of the actual extent and specific manner in which Arab music influenced the Polish composer's work remains unresolved.

This paper explores the role of the adhan, which Szymanowski listened to during his travels to North African countries, as a source of the composer's inspiration. The author presents his own concept of adhan transcription and, based on it, a classification of the four basic features of Arab monodic musical thinking, which are then comprehensively shown in selected songs by Szymanowski from the years 1914–1918, or the period when the Oriental trend predominated. The choice of this genre is not accidental, since the other aim of the paper is to show that it was specifically in the songs that the birth and culmination of the described trend took place.

Keywords: song, adhan, tarab, Orientalism, exoticism, Arabic music, *Love Songs of Hafiz*, Op. 26, *Songs of the Infatuated Muezzin*, Op. 42, Karol Szymanowski.

1. Introduction

Tunis, April 1914. The time for prayer has come. When the muezzin calls from the minaret, 32-year-old Karol Szymanowski listens attentively. This is his first encounter with the Arab world and, as it would later turn out, his last. He is accompanied by his friend Stefan Spiess, thanks to whose account we know the exact course of this expedition, which also included Constantine and Biskra in Algeria, as well as Palermo and Taormina in Sicily (Chylińska 2008, 296). While the course of the expedition leaves no doubt, its effects certainly do. What impact did it have on Szymanowski's music? Did it initiate the Oriental current in his work, as most researchers suppose?¹ And if so, how?

Let's start by establishing what we know for sure:

- a) Between 1914 and 1918, Szymanowski composed important works on Middle Eastern themes, such as *Love Songs of Hafiz*, Symphony No. 3 "Song of the Night", *Songs of the Infatuated Muezzin* (Tomaszewski 2019, 427–428). Yet:
- b) All these pieces are not based on original texts, but merely on paraphrases or stylizations; moreover, Oriental motifs had already appeared in his works before, although to a much more modest extent (Wightman 2001, 147–152);
- c) He was interested in Arab culture and when he returned, he produced several books of notes in which he distinguished sections such as geography, the history of Muhammad, the Qur'an, language, philosophy, literature, history, poetry (Chylińska 2008, 323–325);
- d) His contact with Arabic music was incidental and did not encourage him to study it in depth (Żerańska-Kominek 2007, 116–117);
- e) He listened to the adhan many times (Spiess and Bacewicz 1963, 57).

Zdzisław Jachimecki, the first monographer and a friend of Szymanowski, asked him about the authenticity of the Arabic dance from Act II of *King Roger* (Jachimecki 1927, 59). In response, the composer wrote: "Concerning the theme of dance, about which you ask, it is absolutely my patent. I am delighted that I so succeeded in counterfeiting its 'authenticity' that you felt obliged to search out truly 'authentic' sources for verification. This is my triumph over mawkish East of the Rimskys e tutti quanti" (Szymanowski, ed. Chylińska 1997, 101). These words indicate that 1) he wanted to avoid superficial Orientalism; 2) he was aware of the

¹ The thesis about the presence of an Oriental trend in the middle period of Szymanowski's work (1914–1919) is shared by all monographers of the Polish composer: Jachimecki (1927), Łobaczewska (1950), Golachowski (1956/1948), Samson (1980), Palmer (1983), Zieliński (1997), Wightman (1999), Downes (2003), van Moere (2008), Chylińska (2008), Janicka-Stysz (2013), as well as authors of articles summarizing this period of his work: Zofia Helman (2001) and Tomaszewski (1997, 2019). The exception is Dąbrowski (2010), who remains neutral on this issue. The only attempt to refute this research tradition was made by Żerańska-Kominek (2007), but her radical proposal did not gain wider recognition. *The Szymanowski Companion* (2015), published several years after Żerańska-Kominek's article, contains the entry "Orientalism" and a number of other references to the Oriental trend in the Polish composer's work. Other publications—a monograph on the opera *King Roger* (Wightman 2015) and an article devoted to Szymanowski's connections with French music (van Moere 2017)—confirm the validity of this thesis.

limited possibilities of a European composer approaching Arabic music; 3) he had his own image of the Orient², which was part of his inner landscape (Samson 1979–1980, 71; Janicka-Słysz 2013, 186). Researchers disagree on the nature and extent to which this image influenced Szymanowski's music. Four main views can be distinguished:

- 1) Szymanowski included authentic Arabic music (Alicja Helman 1956, 101–104; Wightman 2001, 153);
- 2) Szymanowski included his recollections of authentic Arabic music, transformed by his own sensibility and European musical language (Janicka-Słysz 2013, 139; Neuer 1981, XVIII; Zofia Helman 2011, 17);
- 3) Szymanowski included his conception of Arabic music (Jachimecki 1927, 47; Chylińska 2008, 495; Zieliński 1997, 83);
- 4) Szymanowski did not include Arabic music (Żerańska-Kominek 2007, 117–120).

The fundamental problem, which remains unresolved, can therefore be summed up in the question: what is the actual connection between Arabic music and Szymanowski's works belonging to his Oriental trend? This article attempts to answer that question. Using the author's classification of the four basic features of Arab monodic musical thinking, it analyzes selected songs by Szymanowski from the years 1914–1918, or the period when the Oriental trend predominated. Its aim is to show that this trend has its basic and only source in the *adhan*.

2. Adhan

The *adhan* or *azan* is the call to prayer (*salat*). It is sacred to every Muslim because, on the one hand, it includes the profession of faith (*shahada*) and, on the other, it announces *salat*—so it is linked to two (of the five) pillars of Islam. *Adhan* is what Europeans colloquially call muezzin singing, but it is not music from a Muslim point of view; according to the Arabs, it would be sacrilegious to introduce music into this sacred activity (Touma 1996, 153–155). That said, the *adhan* is performed as a noble and dignified improvisation on a selected *maqam*.³

The cognitive dissonance that Europeans encounter here (the paradoxical “musical non-music”) is overcome by the Arabs through the concept of *tarab*, one of the most mysterious terms in Arab culture. Its very name contains many different meanings. Referring to a specific state of heightened emotionality, it can mean both ecstasy and enchantment, as well as sadness and joy. At the same time, it signifies the delight of communing with a work of art, be it a painting, a poem, or a piece of music. But most revealingly, the term was originally associated mainly with the recitation of poetry and the Qur'an (Shannon 2003, 74). The deep emotionality of Muslims led them to chant recitations in order to experience the content of the sacred texts as powerfully as possible.⁴ This need for a metaphysical experience, this ecstasy of joy and sorrow, thus pervades the *adhan* and results in the four basic features of Arabic monodic musical thinking.

These features are also present in the *adhan* in the *Hijaz* *maqam* (figure 1), which is performed by Mishary Rashid Alafasy from Kuwait (2016). I have selected this recitation for two main reasons. Firstly, the video has over 9 million views, 5586 comments and about 173,000 “likes”, which shows that it is very popular and representative of *adhan* craft. Secondly, the *Hijaz* *maqam* is based on the *Hijaz jins*, which is made up of intervals of a minor second, an augmented second and a minor second. This creates a melodically distinctive motif that has been associated with the Orient since the 19th century, and which Szymanowski himself used several times.⁵

² Understood as a collection of references, a conglomeration of features derived from fragments of various texts and fantasies (Żerańska-Kominek 2007, 114). This is the meaning of the term Orient in this article. On the other hand, I understand “Oriental” as “viewed from a European perspective, containing certain elements of Arab culture”. I define “to Orientalize” as “to give Oriental features”.

³ *Maqam*, literally “place”, “position”, is a traditionally established melodic pattern, a specific way in which the tones of a given scale proceed according to the register and phase of the presentation, based on 3–5 tone interval cells called *ajns*, and *jins* in the singular. Each *maqam* is made up of two main *ajns*, divided into a lower *jins* and an upper *jins* (Muallem 2010, 72).

⁴ There was also a more pragmatic reason—musical praise of Muhammad's words and deeds was intended to help propagate them (Al Bakri, Mallah, Nuserat 2019, 170).

⁵ The transcription has been produced with notation which I have devised myself and which reflects my observations and thoughts on the practical realization of the *maqam*.

Adhan Hijaz

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The musical score for 'Adhan Hijaz' is composed of 14 numbered staves. Each staff represents a distinct phrase or segment of the adhan. The notation is written in a single melodic line using a treble clef. The music features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Trills (tr) are used as ornaments in several phrases. The overall structure is linear and non-metric, reflecting the traditional style of adhan recitation.

Figure 1. Adhan *Hijaz*

2.1. The first feature—Passage of time

On the one hand, the muezzin cannot afford showy improvisations and purely vocal displays, but on the other hand, his recitation should not be a mere reading. The result is something between singing and speech, and this is what determines the unique kind of passage of time in the adhan. There is no metre here, and the rhythm, shaped according to the structure of the individual words, consists of a free juxtaposition of long and short tones with no definite metric relationship to each other. Silence plays a big role as it separates the phrases/segments from each other—in the adhan described here, there are fourteen of them. In this way, the adhan is freed from any rhythmic regularity because, for that, a noticeable repetition of accents is needed—and they simply do not exist here. This creates a special sense of musical time that is not counted off, but rather unfolds between two moments of silence.

2.2. The second feature—Tonal centralization

The recurring silence is the key formal reference point. For the melodic dimension of the adhan, the tonal centre is the gravitational point. Each segment is built around one main tone, which returns frequently and which ends the entire phrase. In the adhan under analysis, the role of the center is played by tones C4 and F4. Usually, both appear in one segment. Then one of them plays the role of the main center and the other of the secondary center (e.g., in section 6, C1 is the main center and F1 is the secondary center). There is only one occasion when either of these major tones is missing in a particular section (F1 is absent in the last phrase). So we can see that in the analyzed adhan, the *Hijaz jins* (C1-D_♭1-E1-F1) is the main formative element, because whatever the muezzin sings always refers to these two tones, which form the frame of this most important interval cell.

2.3. The third feature—Hierarchy of tones

The tones of the adhan may be classified as: (a) foreground tones, (b) background tones, and (c) episodic tones. The most important difference between them lies in the duration of the tone—the more important, the longer. This observation was the basis for the notation I adopted. The rhythmic values used are by no means equal, but express the importance, or position, of each tone in relation to the others.

(a) Foreground tones are put into whole notes and half notes. The former serve to definitively establish and confirm the tonal center. Let us note that they always appear at the very end of the phase/section, constituting its conclusion and summary. The exception is section 2, in which the whole note appears twice, and at the beginning of its progression. However, this is due to formal logic—it is only here that the muezzin fully begins its presentation, treating the first section as a kind of introduction. On the other hand, the half notes, placed slightly lower in the hierarchy, mark the main tones of the *ajns* maqam and the main syllables of the adhan lyrics.

(b) Secondary tones are written in quarter notes and eighth notes. They are the essential building blocks of the musical action and are performed in the same recitative manner as in speech. The difference between the two is only the slight extension of the tones included in the quarter notes, which serves to slightly emphasize them and is usually due to the effect of the neighbouring half notes.

(c) For episodic tones, I chose notation without beams. These are ornaments that the performer realizes *ad libitum*. They serve to embellish a specific important tone (half note). Their duration is very short, sometimes even close to vibrato. A trill is a frequent effect. The reciter has so much freedom in the use of embellishments that under the influence of the moment they can even use tones that do not belong to the maqam (e.g., in section 6 E_♭4 instead of E4). In Alafasy's performance, the role of embellishments gradually increases over the course of the adhan to become the dominant construction element in the final section. Here they are so elaborate and yet distinctive that this prompts a new name for them: not embellishments, but arabesques. Episodic tones are always melismas, unlike secondary tones, which are built on individual syllables.

2.4. The fourth feature—Principle of repetition

It is the overarching structural idea in adhan. This follows naturally from two features of Arabic musical thinking—the lack of a vertical layer and developmental techniques. The muezzin has no chords at his disposal with which to construct a system of interrelationships, with solutions and cadences. At the same time, he is unable to create a musical narrative involving thematic evolution, because such a concept does not exist in his musical mentality. What is left for him, then? It's what the adhan I have transcribed demonstrates—a handling of recurring “musical motifs” (as Europeans understand them), which he subtly embellishes and expands. An example is the descending motif occurring for the first time in section two (from G4 to C4), which exposes the main *jins* of the maqam. At each repetition, Alafasy adds some new element to it, which often follows from the text used (e.g., section 4). So we see that the musical development runs independently of the verbal development, regulated precisely by the principle of repetition. Moreover, it is also fundamental in the macro-form. Let us note that the pair of sections 9 and 10 is virtually identical to the preceding pair 7 and 8. This is due to the similarity of the text used here, which is not included in the present transcript. Another example of the link between word and tone is shown by comparing the extreme pairs of adhan 1 and 2 with 13 and 14. Both pairs use the same text (“Allah Akbar”), although not in an identical way. While section 2 has the same words as the first one, the final phrase contains a different content (“There is no God but Allah”).

This is accurately reflected in the music. Sections 1 and 13 are identical except for one tone, while 2 and 14 differ in every respect—the tonal center, the role of embellishments, and the construction of the melody. The principle of repetition thus serves here as a brace that binds the whole form together. It is precisely its important role in the adhan that creates for Europeans, accustomed to dynamic narrative development, that characteristic “Oriental” effect of monotony.

Someone might ask at this point: how can one be sure that there is a similarity between the adhan performed by Alafasy and those listened to by Szymanowski? Indeed, this would be a completely justified doubt. After all, there are neither transcripts nor recordings of these particular muezzins calling Tunisians to prayer in the spring of 1914. We are thus left here to speculate about how Szymanowski’s creative imagination might have been influenced by something we can neither see nor listen to. In any other case, even an attempt to formulate any reliable conclusions would be doomed to failure from the start. Not, however, in the case of such an extraordinary sonic phenomenon as the adhan.

The uniqueness of the adhan results from the following two features: unchangeability and universality. The text of the invocation, in which every word is sacred and inviolable, has not changed since the time of Muhammad except for the addition of two verses by the Shiites in the first millennium (Aydar, Atalay 2013, 51–55). The method of recitation has been passed down orally through successive generations of muezzins, and therefore no significant changes have been made over the centuries (Al Bakri, Mallah, Nuserat 2019, 172). At the same time, the performances of the adhan, while obviously varying in detail from region to region, in their essence remain the same throughout *al-alam al-arabi*⁶—the adhan is too sacred to be experimented with. Muslim law strictly regulates the manner and circumstances of its recitation, and also describes a number of situations in which it may be invalid (al-Sistani, 2025). Thus, whether we take a Tunisian adhan, an Egyptian adhan or a Saudi adhan, each of them will be structured according to the same musical rules (Al Bakri, Mallah, Nuserat 2019, 172–175). This means that when listening to an adhan today, and regardless of the country, we are dealing with a musical phenomenon very close to what Szymanowski encountered in Tunis one hundred years ago. A phenomenon which, through the tarab, had a strong influence on his work. And it did so almost immediately.

3. *Love Songs of Hafiz, Op. 26*

When, in August 1914, on the “last normal train” (as he said—the Great War was already underway, Zieliński 1997, 79), he arrived in his hometown of Tymoshovka in present-day Ukraine, he devoted himself without delay to composing. Feeling a surge of inspiration and not wanting to waste time, he decided to create a song cycle on the text he had already used once—on paraphrases of Hafiz’s poetry by German poet Hans Bethge.

Three years earlier, Szymanowski had experienced a deep fascination with these poems. He referred to Hafiz as a “wonderful Persian” whom “Allah Himself threw into my hands” (Szymanowski, ed. Chylińska 1982, 298). Never mind that Bethge’s works actually had little in common with the original texts of Shamsuddin Mohammad (Hafiz is a nickname meaning “one who knows the Qur’an by heart”). Although the German poet did not adhere to the rules governing Hafiz’s lyric poetry of elaborate *ghazal* form⁷ and did not faithfully translate their meaning, he nevertheless managed to capture their metaphysical sense. In his paraphrases, which are admittedly constructed in accordance with the European metrorhythmic tradition, we can discern the outline of a mysterious Persian world in which purely sensual experiences merge imperceptibly with the mystical (Chylińska 2008, 238–240). Szymanowski found in him a passion and philosophical reverie so close to his own, which fitted perfectly into his idea of the Orient (Neuer 1981, XV–XVI). So when, in August 1914, with his impressions of the exotic journey fresh in his mind, he searched for a suitable subject, he returned without hesitation to his already familiar collection *Hafiz: Nachdichtungen der Lieder und Gesänge des Hafiz* (Wightman 1999, 136). The result was groundbreaking.

⁶ “The Arab World” (Arabic).

⁷ A *ghazal* is a lyrical poem of Arabic origin, usually on the theme of love, constructed according to strictly defined rules, comparable in complexity to the Italian sonnet (de Bruijn 2018). Each stanza is a self-contained thought, loosely connected to the previous and next ones, which often raises the issue of internal coherence. There is no Aristotelian logic of beginning, development and conclusion; instead, the structure of the work can be compared to a meditation on a specific topic, in which each stanza approaches the topic from a slightly different angle (Hafez et al. 2013, xxii; Avery and Heath-Stubbs 1952, 10–11). Hafiz is considered the most outstanding creator of *ghazals* in history (Yarshater 2013).

In a nutshell: Szymanowski composed two cycles entitled *Love Songs of Hafiz*—Op. 24 for voice and piano (1911) and Op. 26 for voice and orchestra (1914). The earlier collection is in the late Romantic spirit of Wagner and Strauss, the later abandons it in favor of a musical sensualism inspired by Debussy and Ravel—but does so, one might say, gradually. Op. 26 is, in fact, heterogeneous. It contains orchestrations of three songs from Op. 24 and one old song from 1911 both written in his “old” style, and four new songs, composed after his return, opening a new chapter in his artistic work (Zieliński 1997, 84). The innovations concern all the most important aspects:

- Harmony—liberation from functional thinking
- Form—sequence dominates over transformation
- Colour—timbre as a criterion for shaping musical development
- Texture—multi-layering, overlapping of many smaller elements

The abandonment of functionality allowed for a wide freedom to achieve new tones and colors. However, it also meant the loss of the tonal system which guaranteed an internal sound order. Szymanowski rejected the atonality, so he had to find some other kind of referential point. Driven by this need, he decided to use the most natural way of organizing the sound material—tonal centralization. By choosing a particular tone as a reference point for the others, he gained a tonal basis on which he could place any motifs and color effects. But to achieve it, he turned to the simplest method of creating a tonal center—the principle of repetition. In fact, it is enough to perform a given motif/tone several times in an unchanged form for it to become the determinant for other musical phenomena. This method of structuring the sound course is present in all the new songs of Op. 26.

Yet all this was not enough. With so many new compositional means already at his disposal, Szymanowski needed one more—direct inspiration. An external stimulus was needed to direct the musical innovations I have described above towards a specific goal. And that key element turned out to be Arabic music.

A sequence of artistic stimuli emerges here, culminating in Op. 26. Most likely, it happened as follows: during his travels, Szymanowski listened to the *azan* and experienced tarab. He then discovered a new sound aesthetic—musical sensualism—which delighted him and opened up previously unknown compositional perspectives. Finally, he rediscovered Bethge’s poems, which became a poetic complement to the impressions he had gained in the Middle East—note that the texts selected in 1914 contain names and images directly referring to Arab and Persian culture, which are absent from Op. 24.

All this initiated a creative process that ran, as it were, in reverse order. Poetry gave shape and inner meaning to the songs that were being created, allowing the composer to use a new way of shaping harmony, texture and color for a specific artistic purpose. And since the aim was to create an “Oriental” character (because that was the nature of the texts used), he drew on what he had heard and experienced when encountering the art of the muezzins. Monophonic art—and therefore exclusively melodic.

In Orientalizing *Love Songs of Hafiz*, Szymanowski understandably focused mainly on melodics. As a result, he invented a completely new variant, which clearly distinguishes the songs of 1914 from those of 1911. Unhesitatingly, it can be described as “Arabic.” This is because its essence is the juxtaposition of long intense notes with a series of short notes, in which the former generally determine the tonal center, framed by the latter. Usually the melody is built from small motifs (sometimes of a few notes), which are either repeated unchanged and recur throughout the work, or are subjected to variational transformations based on expanding the original cell and embellishing it with melismas. This creates a characteristic effect of improvisation, quite new in Szymanowski’s work.

Thus, we can see that all the major principles of Arabic music underlie this type of melodics. Tonal centralization is used to create a hierarchy of tones, and the principle of repetition becomes the main way of constructing the musical narrative. The composer achieved this result thanks to his musical intuition, combined with his acquired experience and newly discovered methods of shaping the musical course. He would have applied the first and third principles independently of Arab music, but the need for Orientalization led him instinctively to reach the same conclusions as the musicians of the Middle East. In doing so, he achieved what constitutes the uniqueness of the newly composed songs—he created a distinctive kind of passage of time, much closer to Arabic music than European. Let us remember, however, that these were the beginnings, the first discovery of a new sense of musical time, and consequently each new song contains a different kind and degree of its impact.

The culmination of these innovations is the final song of the cycle, “The Tomb of Hafiz.” Its beginning is innovative because the first nine bars are filled with an extended flute solo, whose selected single long notes are discreetly underlined colouristically by celesta and harmonics of both harps and soloists in a quintet (figure 2). In this way, the flute part is monodic—a novelty in Szymanowski’s musical vocabulary. In addition, it is a monody in the Arabic style. Again, the *Hijaz jins* return (this time from tone D) as the main motif, forming the basis of a tone-hierarchical melody shaped in the spirit of improvisation (the overriding principle of repetition, the extension of the main motif, modulation by a major third downwards in bar 7 and by another major third downwards in bar 9). To further achieve the impression of the flute’s independence, the composer uses frequent changes of the meter and agogic fluctuations. He is clearly concerned with recreating the slowed-down passage of time typical of Arabic music.

The image shows a musical score for the first five bars of "The Tomb of Hafiz" by Karol Szymanowski. The score is for a flute solo, with the tempo marked "Lento assai" and a metronome marking of ♩ = 42-44. The flute part is written in 4/4 time and features a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics. The other instruments listed are Celesta, Arpa I, Arpa II, Violino I (solo), Violini II (div.), Viola (solo), and Violoncello (solo). The Celesta and Arpa parts provide harmonic support with sustained chords and textures. The Violino I part has a melodic line with dynamics ranging from *pp* to *ppp*. The Violini II part is marked "con sord., a punta d'arco" and has dynamics from *ppp* to *p*. The Viola and Violoncello parts are marked "solo" and have dynamics from *p* to *ppp*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 2. Flute melody in the Arabic style in Karol Szymanowski’s “The Tomb of Hafiz” (bars 1–5)

Therefore, in the further course of the song (until the voice appears in bar 19), he also adds a hierarchical, ornamental (though metrically regular) clarinet melody to the flute part as well as a solo 1st violin part built from long rhythmic values, in which a characteristic triplet figure precludes the oboe solo (bar 14). This constitutes another novelty in Szymanowski’s works, since it is a four-bar melody constructed in accordance with Arabic musical thought—a central tone (D5, then D_b5), recurring several times and embellished with tones of shorter duration. Such a melodic line could be arranged by a muezzin. It is followed by three bars, each with a *Hijaz* motif, in the horn (bar 18), horn and voice (bar 19) and both harps (bar 20) parts respectively. Musical time almost stops, accompanied by a gradual reduction in texture—bar 21 is almost entirely filled by the solo voice (and so, again, by monody). By means of a leap of a major seventh upwards in the *pp* dynamics, the composer introduces a repetition of bars 9–13 in the orchestra, while the voice independently develops its part.

The whole next section (bars 27–36), which is expressive and texturally elaborate, also bears an Arabian influence. It can be seen in the virtuosic, melismatic flute solo, the embellished oboe interludes based on a particular tonal center and the several-bar counterpoints of the 2nd violin and English horn, also constructed around a central tone. In the ending (bar 35), the 1st and 3rd French horns evoke the developed *Hijaz* motif. Shortly afterwards, another device typical of Arabian aesthetics appears. In bar 37 the composer achieves a new kind of musical silence (slightly broken by the timpani tremolo and the pedal note of the bass clarinet in *ppp*), which is an autonomous formal element and not just a necessary addition. It forms the boundary between two musical sections—as in the adhan.

In another fragment, in which there is an increase in tension up to the most important climax and its gradual resolution leading to the final return of the *Hijaz* motif (bars 38–51), Szymanowski uses similar Arabic means. Some examples are: the centralized and delicately embellished melody of the 1st viola solo (bars

40–41), the melismas and trills of the hierarchical melody in the flute part (bars 42–43) and the *Hijaz* motif in the voice and 1st clarinet (bar 40).

The ending of the song is based on the central motif that appears in the individual instruments, undergoing augmentation at the end (bars 58–59), which is combined with a gradual dying off of the musical action. The song is bound together by a formal brace—it ends with the same instrumentation and with almost the same material as at the beginning. This is how Szymanowski places the last note in the song, which not only contains all the orientalizing devices he used earlier, but also the musical solutions used in both the older songs (e.g., intense motivically regular melody in the climax) and the new ones (e.g., glissando of the harps). As a result, he achieved an interesting kind of time lapse here, on the one hand avoiding metrical regularity (frequent changes of meter, agogic fluctuations), but on the other, set within the framework of the bar order, not going beyond its mathematical strictness.

4. *Songs of the Infatuated Muezzin*, Op. 42

The Oriental current, inaugurated by Op. 26, reached its most mature form in *Songs of the Infatuated Muezzin*, Op. 42, composed in 1918. The circumstances in which they were created are unique—Szymanowski composed them to poems by his cousin Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, which the latter wrote under the influence of the composer's stories about his exotic travels. Iwaszkiewicz, who had no knowledge or experience of Arabic culture, naturally followed the same path of associations and sensations as Szymanowski (Chylińska 2008, 490–493). In this way, a completely unusual situation was created—the poet provided the composer with poems completely in line with his imagination and sensitivity, enriched, of course, by his own personality, but discreetly enough to allow independent musical adaptation. In other words, Iwaszkiewicz provided Szymanowski with all aspects of this poetry, personally imparting only what the latter could not create himself—that is, the verbal layer and the corresponding lyrical image (Iwaszkiewicz 1981, 54; Boniecki 2015, 113–125).

For the poet, the character of the muezzin is only a pretext for creating a strong, if not controversial image of a passionate man addressing his male beloved. The Oriental context allows for an amplification of expression, containing a provocative vision of the muezzin who, instead of performing his sacred duty, indulges in forbidden affection and consciously commits blasphemy. It was this bold poetic image that so appealed to the composer, because he found in it exactly what he himself associated with the Orient—the power of sensuality, which places love and beauty above everything, even the fear of damnation (Downes 2003, 40, 52).

The kinship of thought and feeling between the poet and the composer meant that Szymanowski made relatively few changes to the texts (it was usually otherwise). However, apart from changing the order, title and addressee of the poems (Chylińska 2008, 491–492), there is one major intervention in the text that unexpectedly conclusively proves what Szymanowski's attitude to the Orient was.

Choosing Iwaszkiewicz's last poem as the lyrics for the first song of the cycle, the composer added the phrase "Allah Akbar" at the beginning and at the end of it. It is a *takbir*, an Arabic phrase translated as "God is great". It is this phrase that always opens and closes the recitation of the adhan, constituting its most characteristic part, easily recognizable even by non-Muslims. Having listened to the adhan on many occasions, Szymanowski undoubtedly stored this distinctive phrase in his memory and applied it to the initial four-note melismatic, identified by Alistair Wightman (2001, 153) as the *Saba jins*, which, according to Andrzej Tuchowski (2001, 177), is the structural source of the entire song. There can be no question of coincidence. The composer consciously supplemented the poem with a *takbir* because he wanted to give the song more authenticity, to make it more Arabic (Iwaszkiewicz naturally could not have known that the muezzin utters these very words).

At the same time, he was not concerned with stylization, that is, with making his music as close to Arabic music as possible, because he by no means intended to abandon the European way of thinking about music and the construction of a musical work. And this is where the whole problem of Szymanowski's Orientalism in music lies—it is difficult to determine where exactly the boundary between the Eastern and the Western runs. The key to solving this problem is to focus on composer's personality and spirituality (Downes 2003, 38–39).

Szymanowski had his own idea of the Orient, based on his numerous readings related to the Arab world (Żerańska-Kominek 2007, 109–111) and his own tourist trip to the Muslim countries of North Africa. In this subjective vision, the Orient was inseparably associated with mystery, beauty, strong feelings and sensual

love, as well as mysticism. For this reason, whenever these categories of experience appear in this period of his work, even in works seemingly unrelated to Arabic culture, Szymanowski introduces Arabic elements in the musical layer, both conscious and intuitive—the latter directly linked to the aesthetics of color and embellishment that he was discovering at the time, evolving over the years and penetrating ever deeper into his compositional mindset. *The Songs of the Infatuated Muezzin* is the culmination of this fascinating process. The use of the words “Allah Akbar” is an indication that Szymanowski remembered the adhan he had once heard and that this recollection was his main inspiration.

It is this song, “Allah Akbar,” which constitutes the most Arab song among Szymanowski’s works. It is here that the composer came closest to, and perhaps even touched upon, the mystery of the Arabic passage of time and the related ecstatic mysticism that sounds in the calls of muezzins. Apparently, it was the still vivid memories of adhan that enabled him to achieve such an authentic effect. Indeed, we can observe an evident creative process that took place here—the initial melisma, based on the *Saba jins*, became the structural basis of the whole song, influencing both the horizontal and vertical layers, and then song no. 1 determined the character and features of the whole cycle, which, after all, was written in a very short time and thus within a single creative act (Chylińska 2008, 490–491). This melisma would not have happened if the composer had not enriched Iwaszkiewicz’s text with *takbir*—the melisma appears on the word Allah, which does not appear in the poem. This suggests that Szymanowski’s imagination was triggered by the just-remembered initial fragment of the adhan. In this song, which combines all four features of Arabic musical thinking (as does the whole of Op. 42), it is possible to distinguish four stages of Szymanowski achieving an increasingly “Oriental” type of passage of time until the last one, which marks the final limit to which the European composer could possibly have reached in his search for Arabic musical effect.

The first type occurs in bars 10–15, and is particularly marked by the principle of repetition and tonal centralization based on an ostinato in the piano part. At the same time, it almost lacks a hierarchy of tones. The exception is the characteristic descending triplet figure, first appearing in bar 11, which gradually becomes more prominent and appears both in the voice part and in inversion in the left hand of the piano (without the first tone—bar 13). The melodic of the voice is similar, in a declamatory style and, apart from the aforementioned triplets, a several-note arabesque appears only once (in bar 14). Harmonically, there is a modulation in this section from the seeming G major to the tonal center of B (in bar 15). Its formal aim is to prepare for the appearance of a hierarchy of tones in the piano, which occurs in bar 16, beginning the second stage, bars 16–23 and bars 6–7. Its essence is the dialogue of the hierarchical melodicism of the voice and piano parts, which leads to the climax of the piece (bars 20–21). Bar 6 is especially notable, as both the harmonic layer and the expressive melodic motif in the voice part become a kind of refrain, which returns in various configurations, but always very audible, in bars 16, 18, and 22. This creates an impression of static action, similar to the effect achieved through the principle of repetition in the adhan. The Arabic-ness of this stage is disrupted by the all-too-important role of the harmonic factor.

But this changes in the case of the next, third type (bars 1–5 and 24–29). Here Szymanowski managed to get exceptionally close to the Arabic sense of the passage of time. The *takbir* words that form the song’s brace⁸ allowed the composer to give absolute priority to the voice, which is shaped in the Arabic manner—with a hierarchy of tones based on a clear tonal center E. Szymanowski was so successful in achieving an “Oriental melodic” that this has attracted the attention of various researchers. Alicja Helman (1965, 135) writes about the play of forces, characteristic of tonal regularity, which, however, is not a tonic action, characteristic of the major-minor system, but a regularity consisting in the formation of points of resistance which form the melodic skeleton. Andrzej Tuchowski (2001, 178) draws attention to the rhythmic shape of the initial figure, which suggests a hierarchy of importance of the constituent tones, of which the frontal, strongly emphasized tone E acts as the tonal centre in the first song. At the same time, the piano part is limited to the role of background or echo, in which the texture and chordal factor are reduced and whose primary purpose is to create the tonal center E, giving the impression of a fixed note (in bars 1–2 the piano realizes only one pitch, precisely E).

⁸ Bars 24–29 are a slightly modified repetition of bars 2–7, except that the last two bars form the conclusion of the work and therefore do not count as stage two, in relation to which they are heavily reduced.

Finally, however, we reach the fourth stage, which is contained in bars 8–9 (figure 3). In bar 9 the melismas of the voice dominate the musical expression to such an extent that the piano falls silent for a moment, and the voice sings solo. However, it does not have such an Arabic spirit as the bar preceding it. This is because it is here, despite the written 5/4 meter, that Szymanowski manages for a brief moment to free himself from the European yoke of a regular pulse and immerse himself completely in musical time flowing independently of anything but a capricious hierarchical melody. While in the voice the intense long tones collide with processions of arabesques, the piano spreads out a wide arc-shaped passage, having its origin and end in the central tone E. In such a texture it is impossible to maintain a constant tempo, but this effect is carefully planned. The voice is to fall into a religious fervour on the verge of ecstasy, and this cannot be achieved with traditional metrical regularity. If the pianist only held the bourdon, the singer, trained on classical European repertoire, would most likely sing her part too rhythmically. The use of the passage prevents this and allows, in this particular bar, to capture the kind of passage of time that every muezzin, not just the infatuated one, feels.

Figure 3. The fourth stage of the “Oriental” passage of time in Karol Szymanowski’s “Allah Akbar” (bars 8–9)

5. Conclusion

Karol Szymanowski’s Oriental current, despite being based on a fictional image of the Orient typical of the era, shows real and deep connections with Arabic musical thought. This is the result of the experience of the tarab, which Szymanowski must have encountered while listening to the adhan. This initiated the process of incorporating the four basic features of Arabic monodic musical thinking, which are present in the adhan, into his work. I have distinguished these features for the purpose of this study.

The process was inaugurated by *Love Songs of Hafiz*, Op. 26. In these songs, the influence of Arabic music is still limited to the melody of selected themes. It is most evident in the final song, “The Tomb of Hafiz.” However, it took another four years for Szymanowski to compose a work that was closest to Arabic aesthetics. These are the *Songs of the Infatuated Muezzin*, Op. 42. Here, the experience of the tarab, transformed by Szymanowski’s intuition and sensitivity, determined the character and expression of the whole cycle. This is evident in the first song, “Allah Akbar,” in which four stages of achieving an increasingly “Oriental” type of passage of time can be distinguished. The last one marks the final limit to which the European composer could possibly have reached in his search for an Arabic musical effect.

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Adhan, tarab ir dainos. Orientas Karolio Szymanowskio kūryboje

Santrauka

Dainos žanras Karolio Szymanowskio kūryboje užėmė ypatingą vietą. Dainoje įkūnijamas glaudus poezijos ir muzikos ryšys šiam kompozitoriui, itin jautriai reagavusiam į žodį, tapo asmeniškiausia ir natūraliausia meninės raiškos forma. Todėl Szymanowskis dainas kūrė visą gyvenimą; būtent šio žanro perspektyva ryškiausiai atskleidžia jo muzikos stilistines tendencijas ir joje vykusius kaitos procesus.

Visgi kompozitorių įkvėpė ne vien poezija ir literatūra. Jo kūrybai svarbūs buvo ir kiti išoriniai impulsai, ypač kelionių metu patirti įspūdžiai, iš esmės pakeitę jo pasaulėžiūrą. Tokį poveikį turėjo 1914 m. kelionė į Italiją ir Šiaurės Afriką. Arabų kultūros patirtis, taip pat pažintis su naująja Maurice'o Ravelio ir Igorio Stravinskio garsine estetika lėmė naują kūrybinę kryptį, kuri ėmė ryškėti prasidėjus Pirmajam pasauliniam karui ir kompozitoriui grįžus į šeimos dvarą. Taip prasidėjo brandusis kūrybos laikotarpis, dažnai vadinamas Viduržemio jūros faze dėl jį apibrėžusių Antikos ir Rytų tematikos inspiracijų. Šis laikotarpis prasideda dainomis op. 26 ir baigiasi dainų ciklu op. 42.

Viduržemio jūros fazės kūriniams būdinga savita garsinė estetika, kurioje lemiamą reikšmę įgauna tembras, ornamentikos struktūrinė funkcija ir itin aukšta emocinė įtampa. Šios Szymanowskio stiliaus ypatybės jau numanomos cikle *Pieśni miłosne Hafisa* („Hafizo meilės dainos“), op. 26. Čia pirmą kartą išryškėja muzikinis sensualizmas, kuris galutinį pavidalą įgyja veikiamas arabų muzikos inspiracijų, nors jos šiuo atveju gana aiškiai stilizuotos. Orientalizacijos proceso kulminacija Szymanowskio kūryboje laikytinas ciklas *Pieśni muezina szalonego* („Susizavėjusio muedzino dainos“), op. 42, kuriame poetinis tekstas sąlygoja kūrinio formos ir raiškos principus, grindžiamus arabų monodinės muzikos savybėmis.

Svarbią reikšmę kompozitoriaus vidurinio laikotarpio kūrybai turėjo *adhan* (musulmoniškas kvietimas mal dai), kurio giedojimo Szymanowskis ne kartą klausėsi. Nors kompozitorius nebuvo susipažinęs su arabų muzikos teoriniais principais ir neturėjo nei jos įrašų, nei notacijos pavyzdžių, jam pavyko išsaugoti stiprų emocinį įspūdį, kurį arabai apibūdina terminu *tarab*. Muedzino giedojimui yra būdinga savita ekspresija, kylanti iš pagrindinių arabų monodinės muzikos principų ir pasireiškianti hierarchiškai organizuota melodika.

Intuicija ir pastabumu pasižymėjęs, išoriniams impulsams itin jautrus menininkas šį ekspresijos tipą perėmė ir perkėlė į savo muziką. Todėl ornamentika, arabų garsinės hierarchijos sistemos esminis elementas, tapo neatsiejama ir naujosios Szymanowskio estetikos dalimi. Naudodamas europinės muzikos priemones, vėlesniuose kūriniuose kompozitorius tyrinėjo arabų muzikinės raiškos principus ir laipsniškai įvedė techninius sprendimus, vis labiau artėjusius prie arabų muzikos. Taigi arabų kultūros įtaka tapo svarbiu veiksniumi, skatinusiu jo vaizduotę ir kompozicinę raidą. Siekdamas perteikti arabų muzikai būdingą laiko tėkmės pojūtį ir atkurti *tarab* efektą, Szymanowskis suformavo savitą muzikinę raišką. Ji matoma ne tik minėtuose dainų cikluose op. 26 ir op. 42, bet ir Trečiojoje simfonijoje, op. 27, Pirmajame smuiko koncerte, op. 35, bei operoje „Karalius Rodžeris“, op. 46, todėl laikytina vienu reikšmingiausių kompozitoriaus kūrybinių rezultatų.